

Opinion

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YOUR VIEWS

Will progress spoil Dry Canyon park?

BY RICHARD LANCE

Guest commentary

Think of Redmond parks and what name pops up? Probably the Dry Canyon Park. Occupant of Redmond's unique geographical feature, the 4 ½-mile-long linear space provides a park corridor down the center of the city's footprint.

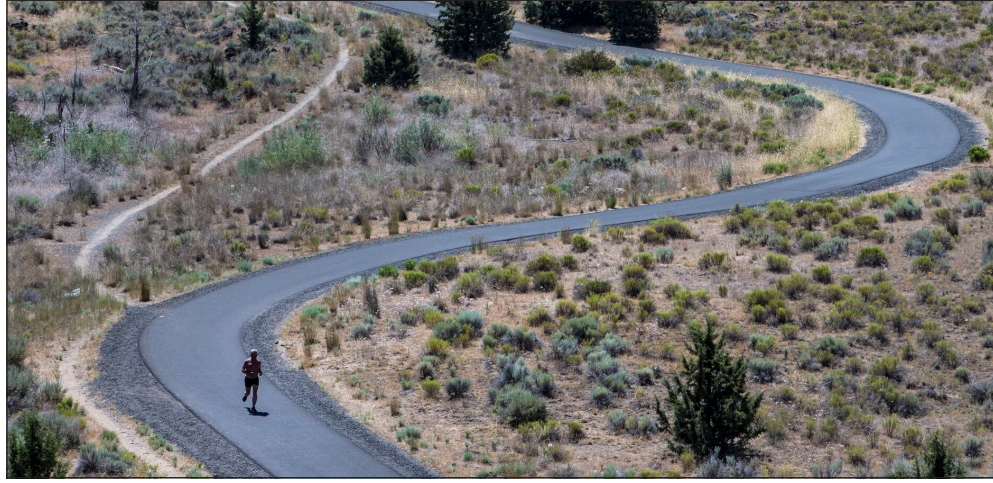
Recreating in Redmond's premier park provides a range of experiences: you can walk the wild northern part formed by eons of ancient volcanic eruption and river erosion; visit Hope Playground, play pickleball or picnic in the central portion; continue south past the amphitheater to where the canyon ends and do a little BiMart shopping, or get a good workout by traversing the entire length.

What's new with the Dry Canyon Park is that it is being used more heavily than ever. This is not surprising given Redmond's rapid growth, and it makes the city's decision to do a detailed plan for the Central Canyon park timely.

This is not the first plan for the park. Meeting many times with a diverse citizen's advisory group and the general public between 2013-17, the city composed the Dry Canyon Master Plan (DCMP) for the entire canyon, and adopted it as part of a new city wide park system plan in 2018.

Two things stand out in my memory about the DCMP:

- 1) You can't expand the canyon, so keep as much of that finite space as possible green;
- 2) Do not locate more parking in the canyon...utilize parking resources to the west, and link them effectively to the park.



A runner makes his way along a curvy section of path while exercising along the Dry Canyon Trail in Redmond in July 2020.

Ryan Brennecke/Bulletin file

Which brings us to my biggest concern about the new planning process. Will it heed these guidelines, or decide they are unrealistic?

It would be easy to do the latter. That is the path of least resistance. As another member of the city parks committee recently opined, no new parking in the canyon was a nice idea; but not a realistic one.

With Redmond's expansion happening on the city's west side, new residents are located further from the Dry Canyon. They will usually drive to the park, and look for parking close their destination.

Already one can see parking happening in high use areas, where it was never intended. Without physical barriers, people get creative and park where they can.

The initial consultant document, a Central Canyon Map of Opportunities and Constraints (O&R), suggests accommodating this, by paving several unofficial parking areas.

It also suggests that more car circulation in the central canyon might be allowed. While this may seem logical, it takes us away from the DCMP.

Is there a realistic alternative? Yes! The city recently talked to Redmond High School administration about using part of the school's large parking lot, for every day park user parking. RHS said "yes", opening an area with ample space that will meet current and future park user needs.

There already exists a paved walking path going from that lot to the Central Canyon park. There's your potential out of canyon parking solution. Let's call it the West Gateway Alternative (WGA).

For it to work, the city would need to make substantial additions and improvements to the existing infrastructure. This large commitment could be aided by the involvement of community volunteers.

Will the WGA feature prominently in the city's forthcom-

ing Central Dry Canyon Park Plan? The initial Map of O&A seems to lean the other direction — towards more cars and parking in the canyon.

The West Gateway Alternative will become a top plan priority only if Redmondites vigorously support it, and the guiding master plan principle of keeping more cars/parking out of the canyon.

That won't be easy, because the city will not permit citizen plan input, until the consultant's draft concept plan is released this summer.

If you are concerned and wish to register your opinion, be prepared to offer input when the city tells you it is time.

In the mean time, if you'd like to learn more about, or discuss the above, contact the author.

■ Redmond resident Richard Lance has been a city Parks Committee member for 20 years and a Dry Canyon Park advocate for 30. Contact: lerich@bendbroadband.com or 541-604-9159.

LETTERS AND COLUMNS

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YOUR VIEWS

Mayor responds to councilor's comments

I am compelled to respond to some misconceptions that Ed Fitch misstated in the June 7 *Spokesman* story "Wide open race for mayor."

The statement that I "misinterpreted" the city charter is a false statement. There is one city attorney, and it is not Ed Fitch. I always seek the attorney's opinion when I rule on council protocol. For example, Ed has violated the Oregon Open Meetings Law on several occasions. Our attorney has informed him as such, as have I. Just because he doesn't like the law doesn't mean he can violate it. He then blames me! He has not been city attorney for years. And since his tenure, we have written new ordinances that cover council roles and responsibilities, and we also now have council rules which cover council behavior.

As Ed pointed out, he was mayor more than 20 years ago, and only served a very short time (He was force to resign as he moved outside city limits). Redmond's population at that time was about 13,400. It now exceeds 36,000 resi-

dents. It is a different city. In addition, we still suffer from some poor decisions during his tenure; closing the old Juniper Golf Course and putting Redmond in debt for millions of dollars to build a new one, selling prime airport property to a private developer and closing a needed railroad crossing (which he now advocates opening).

Councilor Fitch seems to forget that the council is a deliberative body made up of seven members. By democratic procedures, the majority rules. Ed's problem is that he finds himself on the wrong side of votes on many of the issues he pushes.

I am sorry that Ed feels there will be friction as the election approaches. Actually, there has been friction ever since I soundly defeated Ed in the 2018 election and he was subsequently elected to city council. My thought is that he believes his way to victory is to denigrate those councilors who disagree with him. My advice is to look in the mirror and see who is on the wrong side of many issues not related to core functions of city government.

George Endicott
Mayor of Redmond

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